

night's work (including buffalo bill) by (& with illustrations
by) charles bukowski --



Buffalo Bill

whenever the landlord and landlady get
beer-drunk
she comes down here and knocks on my door
and I go down and drink beer with them.
they sing old-time songs and
he keeps drinking until
he falls over backwards in his chair.
then I get up
tilt the chair up
and then he's back at the table again
grabbing at a
beercan.

the conversation always gets around to
Buffalo Bill, they think Buffalo Bill is
very funny. so I always ask,

what's new with Buffalo Bill?

oh, he's in again. they locked him
up. they came and got him.

why?

same thing. only this time it was a
woman from the Jehovah's Witness. she
rang his bell and was standing there
talking to him and he showed her his
thing, you know.

she came down and told me about it



and I told her, 'why did you bother that man? why did you ring his bell? he wasn't doing anything to you!' but no, she had to go and tell the authorities.

he phoned me from the jail, 'well, I did it again!' 'why do you keep doing that?' I asked him. 'I dunno,' he said, 'I dunno what makes me do that!' 'you shouldn't do that,' I told him. 'I know I shouldn't do that,' he told me.

how many times has he done that?

Oh, god, I dunno, 8 or 10 times. he's always doin' it. he's got a good lawyer, tho, he's got a damn good lawyer.

who'd you rent his place to?

oh, we don't rent his place, we always keep his place open for him. we like him. did I tell you the night he was drunk and out on the lawn naked and an airplane went overhead and he pointed to the lights, all you could see was the taillights and stuff and he pointed to the lights and yelled, 'I AM GOD, I PUT THOSE LIGHTS IN THE SKY!'

no, you didn't tell me about that.

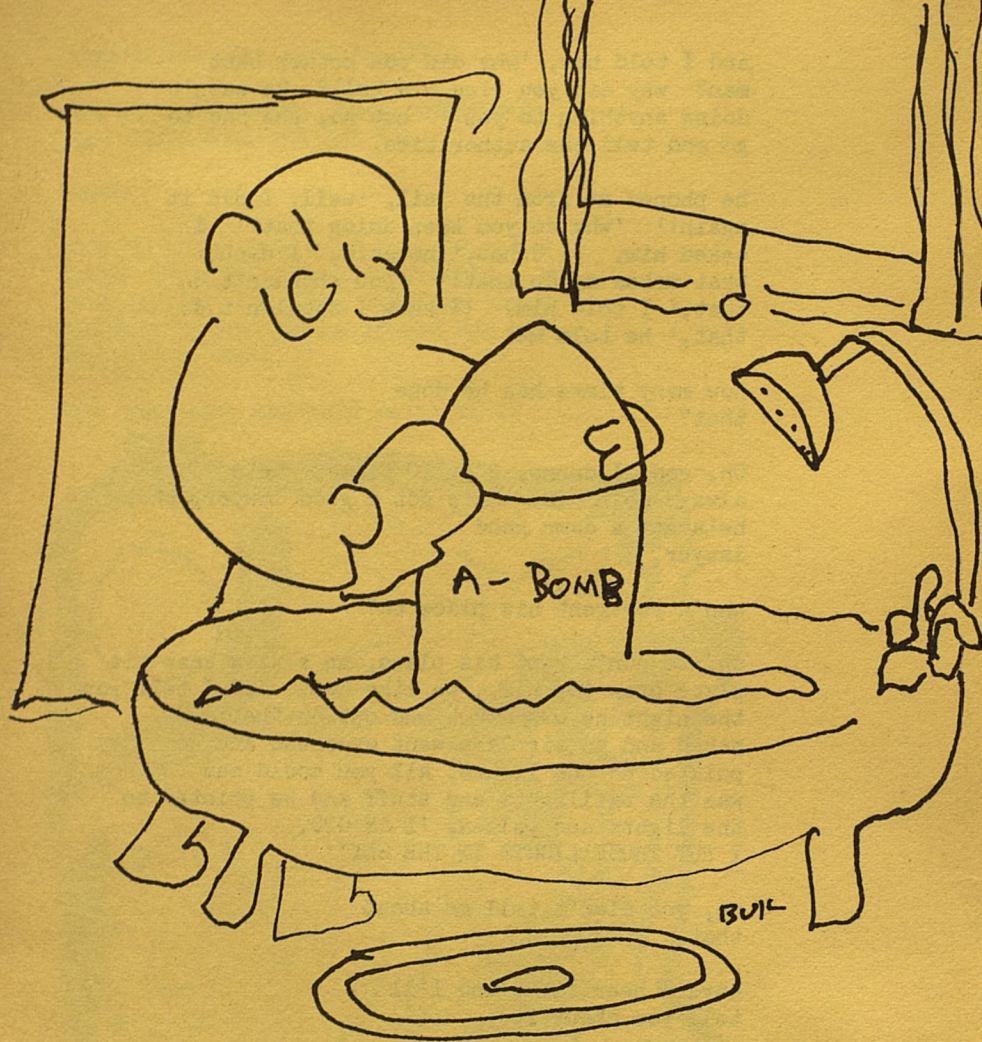
have a beer first and I'll tell you about it

I had a beer first.

a little atomic bomb

o, just give me a little atomic bomb
not too much
just a little
enough to kill a horse in the street
but there aren't any horses in the street

well, enough to knock the flowers from a bowl
but I don't see any
flowers in a
bowl



enough then
to frighten my love
but I don't have any
love

well
give me an atomic bomb then
to scrub in my bathtub
like a dirty and lovable child

(I've got a bathtub)

just a little bomb, general,
with pugnose
pink ears

smelling like underclothes in
July

do you think I'm crazy?
I think you're crazy
too

so the way you think:
send me one before somebody else
does.

The colored Birds

it is a highrise apt. next door
and he beats her at night and she screams and nobody stops it
and I see her the next day
standing in the driveway with huge curlers in her hair
and she has her huge buttocks jammed into the same black
slacks and she says, standing in the sun,
"god damn it, 24 hours a day in this place, I never go anywhere!"
and then he comes out, proud, the little matador,
a Jewish pail of shit, his belly hanging all over his bathing
trunks -- he might have been a handsome man once, might have,
now they both stand there and he says,
"I think I'm goin' for a swim."
she doesn't answer and he goes inside to the pool and
dunks into the fishless, sandless water,
the peroxide-codeine water,
and I stand by the kitchen window drinking coffee
trying to unboil the fuzzy, stinking picture --
after all, you can't live elbow to elbow to people
without wanting to draw a number on them.
everytime my toilet flushes they can hear it. everytime they
go to bed I can hear them.

soon she goes inside and then comes out with 2 large colored birds
in a cage. I don't know what they are. they don't talk. they
just move a little, always seeming to twitch their tail-feathers
and shit. that's all they do.
she stands there looking at them.
he comes out: the little tuna, the little matador, out of the pool,
a dripping unbeautiful white, the cloth of his wet suit gripping
clearly against his balls.
"get those birds in the house!"
"but the birds need sun!"
"I said, 'get those birds in the house!'"
"the birds are gonna die!"
"you listen to me, I said, '-- GET THOSE BIRDS IN THE HOUSE!'"
she bends and lifts them, her huge buttocks in the same black
slacks looking so sad.
he slams the door. then I hear it.
BAM!



she screams

BAM! BAM!

she screams

then: BAM!

and she screams

I pour another coffee and decide that that's a new one: he usually only beats her at night. it takes a man to beat his wife night and day. although he doesn't look like much he's one of the few real men around here.

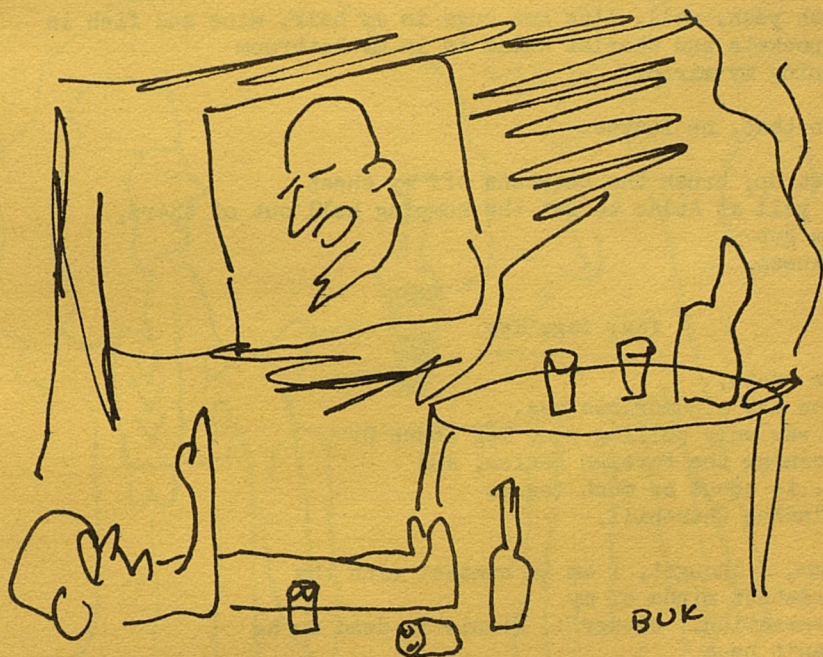
Somebody always breaking my dainty solitude ...

hey man! somebody yells down to me through my broken window,

ya wanna go down to the taco stand?

hell, no!

I scream from down on the floor.



why not? he asks.

I yell back, who are you?

none of us knows who we are, he states, I just thot maybe you wanted to go down to the taco stand.

please go away.

no, I'm comin' in.

listen, friend, I've got a half a foot of salami with greasy sides and the first fink walks in here, he's gonna get it in the side of his mouth!

don't mess with me, he answers, my mother played halfback for St. Purdy High for half a year before somebody found her squatting over one of the urinals.

oh yeah, well, I've got bugs in my hair, mice and fish in my pockets and Charles Atlas is in my bathroom shining my mirror.

with that, he leaves.

I get up, brush the beercans off my chest and yell at Atlas to get the humping hell out of there, I've got business.

fag, fag, fag

he wrote,
you are a humorless ass,
I was only pulling your leg about D.
joining the Foreign Legion, and
D. is about as much fag as
Winston Churchill.

hmm, I thought, I am in contact with the
greatest minds of my
generation. clever!: Winnie is dead so he
can't be a
fag.

the letter continued,
you guys in California are fag-happy,
all you do is sit around and think about
fags. just the same I will send you the anti-war
materials I and others wrote, although I
doubt it will stop the
war.

ten years ago he had sent me a photo of
D. and himself at a picnic ground.
D. was dressed in a Foreign Legion uniform,
there was a bottle of wine,
and a table with one tableleg
crooked.

I thought it over for ten years and then
answered:

I have nothing against 2 men sleeping together
so long as I am not one of those 2
men.

I didn't infer which one was the
fag.



anyway, today I got the anti-war materials
in the mail, but he's right:
it won't stop the war or anything
else.

The Screw-Game

one of the terrible things is
really
being in bed
night after night
with a woman you no longer
want to screw.

they get old, they don't look very good
anymore -- they even tend to
snore, lose
spirit.



so, in bed, you turn sometimes,
your foot touches hers --
god, awful! --
and the night is out there
beyond the curtains
sealing you together
in the
tomb.

and in the morning you go to the
bathroom, pass in the hall, talk,
say odd things; eggs fry, motors
start.

but sitting across
you have 2 strangers
jamming toast into mouths
burning the sullen head and gut with
coffee.

in ten million places in America
it is the same --

stale lives propped against each
other
and no place to
go.

you get in the car
and you drive to work
and there are more strangers there, most of them
wives and husbands of somebody
else, and besides the guillotine of work, they
flirt and joke and pinch, sometimes tend to
work off a quick screw somewhere --
they can't do it at home --
and then
the drive back home
waiting for Christmas or Labor Day or
Sunday or
something.

a beginner's bibliography of bukowski:

- 1.. "Aftermath of a Lengthy Rejection Slip" (1944, story);
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- 2.. "20 Tanks from Kasseldown" (1946, prose); Portfolio III,
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-- 30.5 x 40.5 cm.) 1000 copies. Caresse Crosby was ed-
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prose.
- 3.. Flower, Fist and Bestial Wail (1961, poem booklet) Hearse
Press. Eureka, Calif. (28 pp. unnumbered, offset in white
illust. wrappers -- 14 x 21.5 cm.) small edition. Publ.
by E. V. Griffith as 5th Hearse Chapbook; excellent cover
by Ben Tibbs. Copies are rare.
- 4.. Poems and Drawings (1962, poem-drawings booklet) an extra
issue of Epos, A Quarterly of Poetry, Crescent City, Fla.
(26 pp. 11trpress in yellow wrappers -- 15.3 x 23.5 cm.)
no limitation noted. Totally devoted to C.B., 3 drawings.
- 5.. Longshot Pomes for Broke Players (1962, poem-drawings
booklet) 7 Poets Press, N. Y. (44 pp. unnumbered, offset
in brown illust. wrappers -- 15 x 23.5 cm.) no limitation
noted. Includes self-biography. Publ. by Carl Larsen et
al.
- 6.. Run With the Hunted (1962, poem booklet) Midwest Poetry
Chapbooks, Chicago, Ill. (32 pp., offset in red wrappers
-- 14 x 21 cm.) no limitation noted. Publ. by R. R. Cus-
caden.

- 7.. "The Outsider of the Year Award" (1963, poems, letters, testimonials, etc) The Outsider 3: 57-78, 92-96
- 8.. It Catches My Heart in Its Hands subtitle: New and Selected Poems 1955-1963 (Oct. 1963, poem book) Loujon Press, New Orleans La. (97 pp., ltrpress on cream paper with colored paper divisional inserts containing holograph reprod., wrappers over boards -- 18.7 x 25.7 cm.) 777 copies. Intro. by John William Corrington, photo cover by Henri L Chevrier, photo of C.B. by John Stevens. Photocopy of C.B. letter dated 11/23/63 in later copies.
- 9.. Grip the Walls (1964, poem booklet) Wormwood Review Press, Storrs, Conn. (8 pp. offset -- 14 x 21.5 cm.) 600 copies, 24 signed with illustrations. Issued as detachable booklet of Wormwood: 16, pp. 15-22.
- 10.. Crucifix in a Deathhand subtitle: New Poems 1963-65 (Apr. 1965, poem book) Lyle Stuart, Inc., N.Y. (101 pp., ltrpress on colored papers with illust. wrappers over holograph reproduct. on cover -- 21.4 x 31.6 cm.) 3100 sgnd. copies. Designed, printed and handbound by Louise and Jon Webb of Loujon Press. Cover and illustr. by Noel Rockmore. Introduction by C.B.
- 11.. Cold Dogs in the Courtyard (1965, poem booklet) Literary Times & Cyfoeth Publications, Chicago, Ill. (24 pp., ltrpress in brown illust. wrappers -- 13.9 x 21.1 cm.) 500 copies. Cover by Betsy Milam, forward by C.B.
- 12.. Confessions of a Man Insane Enough to Live With Beasts subtitle: Fragments from a Disorder, See: Human Race (1965 prose booklet) Mimeo Press, Bensenville, Ill. (52 pp., mimeo on colored papers in pink illustr. wrappers -- 13.8 x 21.6 cm.) 500 copies. Cover is by Anna Purcell, intro. by Steve Richmond, publ. by Douglas Blazek.
- 13.. The Genius of the Crowd (1966, poem booklet) 7 Flowers Press Cleveland, Ohio (22 pp., handpress in green illustr. wrappers -- 11.7 x 15.4 cm.) 103 copies. Pages printed on cream colored envelopes, cover and text prints by Paula Marie Savarino. Press handling by d. a. levy.
- 14.. All the Assholes in the World and Mine (1966, prose booklet) Open Skull Press, Bensenville, Ill. (28 pp., mimeo in brown illustr. wrappers -- 13.8 x 21.5 cm.) 400 copies. Cover by C.B., dedicated to Wm. Wantling, publ. by Douglas Blazek.
- 15..